



Our Place

WHATAWHATA COMMUNITY FACILITY

Feasibility Investigation, November 2018

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Executive Summary

The purpose of this investigation is to assess the feasibility of the planned development of a community facility in Whatawhata, provisionally called “Our Place”.

The Whatawhata community, with the positive support of the Waikato District Council (WDC), has been working on this project for several years. The intention is that the new facility will provide for a wide range of uses, by a wide range of users and be suited to the wider community’s needs.

There are no facilities within Whatawhata that are able to provide for the needs that this project seeks to satisfy. There are two halls in other communities within 15 minutes drive. It is agreed that these are not appropriate for Whatawhata’s needs and that a sufficient ‘Community of Interest’ exists to justify Whatawhata having its own facility.

The vision is for a simple and modest building, of 200 to 300 sqm. It will be sited on land currently owned by WDC. There is some planning and compliance work required to provide for waste water disposal and access. The adjacent Peehi Houkura urupaa is also an important consideration which requires consultation and formal agreement with iwi.

Community consultation to date has confirmed that there is significant need, and general support, for the proposal. Significantly the project is being advanced by a motivated group of community members, and a project team which will maximise the outcomes of this project.

Current and expected demographic and social changes over the next few decades mean new facilities need to be adaptable to ensure they remain relevant and viable. This should be considered as final plans for the facility are made.

As well as providing for the community’s needs a new facility would provide a range of benefits to the wider community including increased sport and recreation participation, fostering community groups, improved community health, reduced social problems and increased community morale. It would assist the WDC to meet its commitments and make the area a more attractive place to live.

The current forecast, high level, cost of the facility is \$750,000 plus gst. WDC has undertaken to contribute \$250,000 towards the project. The balance is intended to be raised from community funders, and the local community.

In the event of a shortfall from fundraising there is the possibility of WDC applying a targeted rate to pay for a loan that would cover the shortfall. A formal consultation process would be required before any targeted rate would be applied.

Forecast operational revenue, including a targeted rate, and costs, indicate that the facility will produce an operational surplus, and be sustainable in the longer term.

This project is well conceived and has a very high likelihood of providing significant benefits for Whatawhata, at a realistic cost.

Purpose

This investigation is to assess the feasibility of developing a new community facility at Whatawhata.

It has been initiated by WDC and a community project group, for the purposes of informing and supporting community engagement, and assisting with grant funding applications.

The proposed facility is referred to as “Our Place” within the community.

Background

Within the Whatawhata community there has been interest in building a new community centre for a number of years. This has been led by the Whatawhata Ratepayers and Residents Association (WRRRA). The WRRRA has carried out considerable background work and led discussion within the community. This has resulted in identification of a preferred site, scoping of the type of facility, and expected uses and user groups.

WDC has expressed support for the project, formally via resolution and through inclusion in the 2015-2025 Long Term Plan (LTP), and has formally resolved to support the proposed catchment.

Two Council funded pieces of work are relevant to this feasibility investigation.

1. **Hall Feasibility Survey**¹ - This comprehensive study noted that the Waikato community hall network was complete based on a drive time and accessibility assessment, but noted that a building at Whatawhata could be justified based on a Community of Interest approach. WDC supports the Community of Interest approach for Whatawhata.
2. **Proposed Whatawhata Community Facility Preliminary Overview of Resource Consent Requirements**². This report provides a preliminary planning assessment for the proposed facility, setting out likely resource consent requirements, and areas that may be the focus of those resource consents.

Project Description

Whatawhata is a community of approximately 2500 people, within the Waikato District. It is located at the crossroads of State Highways 23 and 39, 15 minutes west of Hamilton.

The proposal is for a single building with a floor area of approximately 200 to 300m². While not yet specifically defined, it is anticipated that the facility would provide for multiple community uses including meetings, indoor sports, community functions, school activities etc.

¹ Waikato District Halls Feasibility and Associated Facilities Study Report, Visitor Solutions, 2017

² Proposed Whatawhata Community Facility Preliminary Overview of Resource Consent Requirements, GMD Consultants for Waikato District Council, 2017

Site

The preferred site is located near the intersection of State Highway 23 (Hamilton to Raglan) and State Highway 39 (Whatawhata to Te Rapa). It is a rear site, with current access from an unformed (gravel) road reserve which meets State Highway 39 approximately 20 metres from the intersection of the Highways. There is potential for alternative access to the site via an unformed and narrower access strip along Rothwell Lane, further to the north along SH39. This would require some forming of a new accessway and clearance of trees.

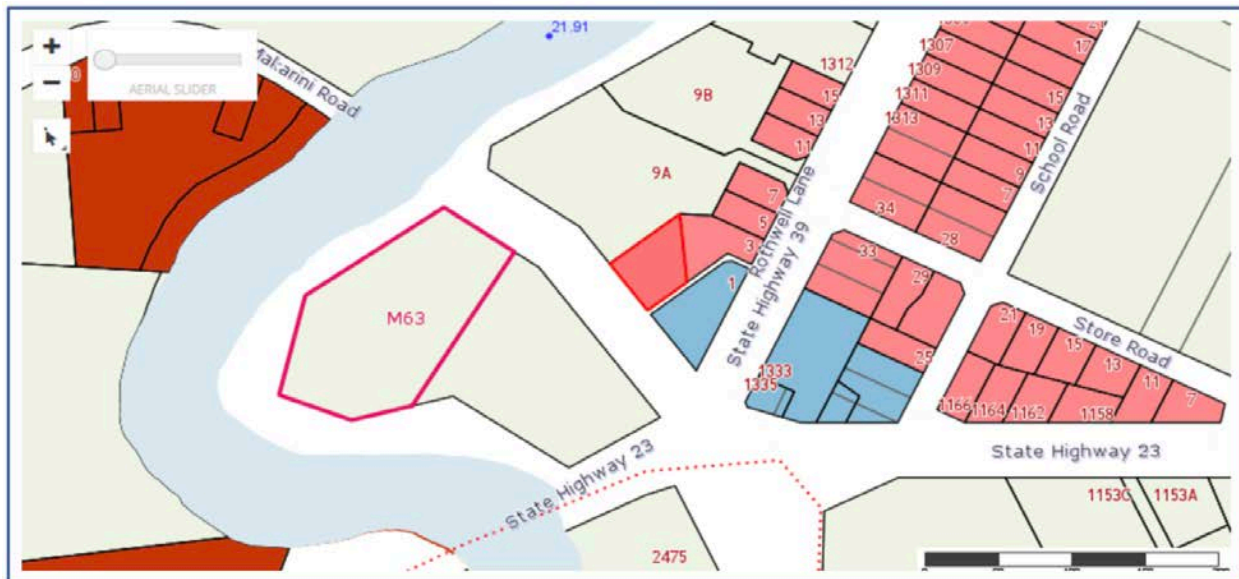
The site has no specific 'street address'. The site is relatively flat and grassed, and has no existing buildings. It is owned by WDC. In the past there was a hall situated on this site.

The site is approximately 2,000 square metres in size. There may not be space for some requirements including a waste water soakage field. It is intended to use the adjacent road reserve for any septic field that is required, and for access. Informal approval for this has been given by WDC roading staff and marae representatives.



The site is bordered to the east by a café, to the north by an open grassed area with a shed that is used as a residential dwelling, and to the south by cemetery reserve land. Further to the west, and utilising

the same road reserve access, is the Peehi Houkura urupaa. Beyond this, the Waipa River runs in a north-westerly direction, approximately 100 metres from the subject site at the closest point.



Source: Proposed Whatawhata Community Facility Preliminary Overview of Resource Consent Requirements, GMD Consultants.

The site is zoned 'Living' in the operative Waikato District Plan (the site is in darker red in the image above). The proposed District Plan will rezone the site as Residential.

The urupaa to the west is a designated site, with WDC identified as the requiring authority.

Access to the site is currently via a track, on WDC owned road reserve, that runs directly off SH39 only 10 or so metres from the SH intersection. Due to safety concerns for hall users, and urupaa visitors, it is proposed that this access point is closed off and a new access via Rothwell Lane is created.



The site looking east towards the café, with the current access on the right.



Rothwell Lane towards the café and the trees that will be removed for access.

It is proposed that WDC will extend Rothwell Lane through the trees and into the current carparking/road reserve which currently provides access to the urupaa. Talks have been had with local Marae representatives and the café owner (currently using the space for parking) and they are relatively comfortable with this plan though formal lwi sign off has yet to be received for this work.

NZTA is also supportive of this. Indications are that they will contribute to the cost of the new entrance and access. WDC will also contribute to some costs of developing the access.

Demographics

Snapshot:

- Whatawhata is a small settlement in the context of the Waikato District.
- Based on data from the 2013 census, Statistics New Zealand 2475 people normally live in Whatawhata. This is 3.9% of Waikato District's population.
- Whatawhata's population is forecast to increase to 3240 by 2031, and 4205 by 2051.³
- There are 670 rateable dwellings in the proposed Whatawhata community facility catchment.
- Average age is 40.1 years, which is slightly above the average for Waikato District.
- 23.2% are aged under 15 years, 10.1% are aged 65 years or over. These are close to the Waikato District averages.
- Over 80% of Whatawhata residents describe themselves as being of European ethnicity. 14.4% Maori, 1.5 Pasifika, 1.9% Asian.
- Average unemployment 3.6% (Waikato District 6.9%)
- Median income \$37,800 (\$30,500 Waikato District)
- Average household size 3.0 people, (2.8% Waikato District)
- Couples with children 50.2% (43.2% Waikato), couples without children 42.6% (39.3% Waikato), single parent with children 7.6% (17.5% Waikato) of all families.
- 81.2% of dwellings are owned by the occupants (67.2 % Waikato District)
- Rented dwellings average rent \$250/week,(\$240 Waikato District)

³ 2016 update of area unit population, household, and labour force projections for the Waikato Region, 2013-2061, University of Waikato, 2016

Policy Framework

The report, Proposed Whatawhata Community Facility Preliminary Overview of Resource Consent Requirements, provides a comprehensive assessment of the relevant local authority objectives and policies which apply to this project. The following italicised extracts are from that report:

The objectives and policies of a District Plan set out the desired outcomes for a zone, and the resource management directions aimed at achieving those outcomes. As such they are a helpful place to begin looking at the appropriateness of a Community Facility in the Living Zone.

While not an objective or policy, it is also worth noting that the introduction to the Living Zone rules states that:

The Living Zone contains standard lot residential and home occupations. Churches, schools and places of assembly are expected in the zone, subject to resource consent. Rules seek to manage activities so that any adverse effects (such as noise) do not detract from the amenity values expected for residential neighbourhoods.

Overall, the objectives and policies appear to anticipate and support Community Facilities locating in the Living Zone, as long as any adverse effects generated by the activity (traffic, noise, lighting etc.) are adequately avoided, remedied or mitigated.

Under the Waikato District Plan, the need for a resource consent can be triggered:

- 1. By a type of activity*
- 2. By the size, shape and location of a building*
- 3. By an effect generated by an activity*

Type of Activity

In accordance with Rule 21.10.02 of the Waikato District Plan, a Community Facility activity in the Living Zone is a Discretionary Activity and therefore resource consent is required.

The Council may grant or refuse consent for a Discretionary Activity. Consent may be granted

with conditions. Discretionary Activities are assessed on full range of assessment matters referred to in section 104 of the Resource Management Act.

Building Standards

As well as the activity which they contain, the Waikato District Plan treats buildings as an activity in itself, in recognition that the size, shape and location of a building can generate adverse effects. As with most District Plans in New Zealand, the Waikato District Plan sets out standards for buildings, which if complied with, would ensure that the building itself is a Permitted Activity.

Given that the proposed site is in excess of 2000m² a building of 200m² should be able to be located on the site without triggering any of the above standards. Where a standard is breached, resource consent would be required for a Discretionary or Non-Complying Activity (depending on which standard is triggered).

Effects of Activity

Whether the effects generated by the Community Facility activity also trigger the requirement for resource consent will depend on the nature, scale and intensity of the activity on the site, and the types of effects that it generates.

As noted in the table [included in report], Appendix A and B of the Waikato District Plan sets out engineering requirements for any activity. This includes parking, manoeuvring and access standards, that if breached, would require resource consent.

Appendix A parking standards require one car parking space per 35m² of public floor area for a Community Facility, and one space for loading a heavy goods vehicle (HGV). For a 200m² Community Facility, a minimum of 6 car parking spaces and one HGV loading space would be required.

Considering the general nature of Community Facilities, along with the proposed 200m² size, it is likely that the proposal will breach at least one of the standards in the table above. It is likely that there will be days where the Community Facility will generate more than 30 vehicle movements. An activity that does not comply with this standard is a Discretionary Activity.

If other standards are breached, it would be a Restricted Discretionary or Discretionary Activity.

Waikato Regional Plan Assessment

The Waikato Regional Plan (administered by the Waikato Regional Council) is also a relevant consideration. The discharge of domestic sewage is considered to be the most relevant matter to this proposal:

For the purposes of the rule [included in the report], 'effective disposal area' means the area of land that is available for the infiltration and assimilation of effluent. The effective disposal area may extend beyond the property boundary provided an easement is registered on the title of the receiving property.

Given that the proposed site is less than 2500m², either further land would need to be secured by easement on an adjacent site, or resource consent would be required from the Regional Council as a Discretionary Activity.

Affected Parties

An important part of any resource consent application and assessment is consideration of who may be affected by a proposal.

A proposal may need to be publicly notified (depending on the magnitude of the adverse effects) and if so the applicant will be informed of this decision. If the Council decides that a proposal does not need to be publicly notified, it will then decide if there are any affected persons. The applicant has the opportunity to seek the written approval of these parties. The only time a resource consent application is processed as non-notified is when all affected parties have given their written approval to the application.

Any person is considered to be affected if the effects on those parties are "minor" or "more than minor". This will often be owners and occupiers of surrounding properties, but may also be any agencies responsible for infrastructure or other aspects of the environment.

The final decision on who is an affected party is the Councils alone. Understanding who the Council may consider to be an affected party usually becomes clearer when the details of a proposal are known and the effects can be thoroughly assessed and understood.

Comments have been sought from NZTA on the location and access arrangements. NZTA have expressed concerns about the proximity of the larger access to the intersection of the State Highways. NZTA consider that a traffic impact assessment would be required to accompany a resource consent application, which would need to include and address turning movements between the Highways.

NZTA have suggested using the smaller access for the community facility and gating off the other access (then contractors can gain access to the gravel).

Again note that these are only preliminary comments provided by NZTA.

Note also that effects on the urupaa to the west will need to be considered, and it is recommended that consultation be undertaken with the relevant iwi in order to understand what those effects might be, and how they might be addressed.

Summary

A community facility in this location would require resource consent under the Waikato District Plan as a Discretionary Activity. If certain building standards are breached, the activity may be considered as a Non-Complying Activity.

While resource consent would be required, the objectives and policies of the Waikato District Plan clearly anticipate this type of activity occurring in the Living Zone. Focus therefore needs to be placed on ensuring that any adverse effects of the activity on the surrounding area can be appropriately avoided, remedied or mitigated.

Matters such as vehicle access, traffic movements, and disposal of wastewater appear to be the most significant potential adverse effects that will need to be addressed in any resource consent application.

Existing Facilities

Whatawhata Rugby Club



The existing Rugby Clubrooms are quite small (approximately 150 sqm, including changing rooms) and require significant works to bring them up to a reasonable standard.

During the process of developing options for a new facility the WRRRA worked with the Rugby Club to look at the possibility of a community facility on the Council Reserve currently housing the Club.

This was ruled out due partly to limitations of the site, mainly in regard to accessibility and road safety. There is likely to be some rerouting and road development of SH39 that will affect the rugby club grounds. It was also realised by both parties that they had differing requirements from a facility and that the existing clubrooms wouldn't suit the needs of the community.

Whatawhata Tennis Club

The tennis club is located adjacent to the rugby club, and has a very small clubroom.



Marae

There are 2 local Marae, Te-Papa-o-Rotu, and Oomaero, both of which are located across the Waipa River from the township, on Maori Point Road.

Te-Papa-o-Rotu has recently built a facility which is available for use by the community, however it is felt that this is not appropriate for use as a facility by the wider community as use may be restricted at times during marae events and tangi. Due to the large number of people with ancestral ties to Whatawhata and local marae there are often events and tangi at the marae.

It is quite likely that marae and groups connected to them would make good use of a new facility at times when the marae are being used for other purposes.

Golf Club

The Te Kowhai Golf Club, which is located at at Whatawhata on SH23, has a small clubhouse which is regarded as unsuitable for community events due to its small size and limited availability.

Whatawhata Primary School

Currently the school has no facility of its own which can be used by groups for indoor activities. It currently uses Te-Papa-o-Rotu marae and Te Kowhai Hall for a range of groups. This requires arranging transport, and is subject to availability.

Due to Ministry of Education policy of only funding new classrooms, and a lack of space for new buildings, development of its own hall/gym is not an option.

Te Kowhai Hall

There is a hall at Te Kowhai but this is relatively well utilised already. This hall is approximately 7kms away, within 7-8 minutes' drive time of Whatawhata. This hall is currently at or near capacity and its local population is projected to grow by approximately 35% from 2013-2043. Additional bookings may be difficult to accommodate.

Importantly the Whatawhata community does not identify with Te Kowhai. It would not be feasible to try to impose use of Te Kowhai Hall as the solution to Whatawhata's lack of a community space.

Koromatua Hall

There is also a hall at Koromatua, in the Waipa District, approximately 10 minutes drive from Whatawhata. A number of Waipa District ratepayers fall within the proposed catchment, although it is felt they are more aligned with the Whatawhata community. It is proposed that these ratepayers will come across to the Whatawhata catchment (if they agree, and if it goes ahead). This will be tested through the consultation process. The Koromatua Hall committee supports this proposal as does the Waipa District Council (in principle).

Whatawhata Residents and Ratepayers Association

The WRRRA is a well organised and widely supported group, which operates as an unofficial community board. It sees its main functions as being an interface with the WDC, advocating for the local community, relaying and seeking information.

It has its own Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/whatawhataresidents/>.

WRRRA holds regular meetings, of 10-12 committee members, to discuss and work on a variety of issues. It has been developing the idea of a new community facility for the past 7 years, and has consulted widely in the local community.

Stakeholder Consultation Feedback Overview

The idea for a new facility was raised at a community meeting around 2011 of approximately 200 people that came together to discuss a number of issues. At that meeting a komatua from one of the marae commented that the Whatawhata community is one that is divided along a number of lines, including by the state highway that has effectively isolated significant sections of the community. He commented that these divisions are worsened by the lack of a place to meet and bring the community together. These comments sparked discussion of the need for a new facility.

From there the WRRRA put together a submission for a new community facility to the 2012 Waikato District Council LTP. A facility was allowed for in the 2015-2025 LTP subject to securing funding (via a targeted rate and/or through grant funding).

In November 2016 an Open Day was held at the Village Cafe to provide the public and local community opportunity to discuss and provide ideas for a community facility. Approximately 200 people attended. There was unanimous support for the idea.

The following community groups have also been consulted:

Whatawhata Rugby Club – while the rugby club wants a new or upgraded clubrooms, it has acknowledged that its needs are different than those of the wider community and it is not feasible to develop a facility for combined use.

Whatawhata Tennis Club – Feels its own clubrooms are barely sufficient for its needs and would use the new facility for social functions, AGM's and other meetings.

Te Kowhai Golf Club - the club has a nine hole course on the edge of Whatawhata on SH23. The club has a small clubhouse which suits its own needs but is not suitable for wider community needs.

Whatawhata Knaps and Knickers Playgroup – due to lack of a venue the group is currently not meeting.

Whatawhata Primary School has been involved in discussions, and supports the WRRRA's efforts. See description below.

Local Businesses

Local businesses including the Backyard Bar & Grill, Gasoline Alley and The Village Café are located very close to the proposed site, and are very supportive. The general feeling is that the new hall will

contribute significantly to the sense of community in Whatawhata, and help build that part of Whatawhata as the physical focal point of the community.

Iwi

As part of the preparation for the planned WDC consultation process both local marae chairs, Rik Samuels of Oomaero and Milton Ngauhue of Te-Papa-o-Rotu., were consulted in regards to location and cultural sensitivities.

On 25 April 2017 a meeting of WRRRA representatives, Cr Smith, Milton Ngaruhe, Rik Samuels and Kaumatua was held at Te papa o rotu marae to discuss mutual benefits, and marae support for the project. Iwi representation on a future steering group was also discussed.

A number of meetings and discussions were held with Rik Samuels to discuss the location. Although closing of the current urupaa entrance at SH 39 was not specifically discussed at that time, there was recognition that the development of a community facility could provide opportunity to improve egress and parking for the urupaa.

Since these initial discussions there has been further discussion between the groups around closure of the current urupaa entranceway. Work is underway to develop a solution that will work for all parties. If agreement can be reached NZTA has agreed to complete some of the required work.

Community Workshop

As part of the Visitor Solutions Waikato District Halls Feasibility and Associated Facilities Study a Whatawhata community workshop was held on the evening of Tuesday 14th June 2016 with six members of the Whatawhata Residents and Ratepayers Committee present. This included the group's Chairperson and another member who was also representing the local marae on some issues. Noel Smith, Councillor for the Newcastle Ward of WDC, was also in attendance at the session which took place at the Whatawhata Tavern.

The following extract from that report provides useful stakeholder feedback:

7.5.1 Current Facilities

Significantly the workshop revealed that the Whatawhata community does not currently have a designated community facility that may be used for meetings and social, community or business-related functions and activities. Such a facility would enable the Whatawhata community to "aspire to be more of a community than we are" at present. Participants felt that local needs may potentially increase in the foreseeable future on account of the increasing local population and the town being transformed by so-called "country living". They cited the growing school roll and playgroup enrolments as evidence of this.

Instead a range of different places are used when people or organised groups wish to hold meetings of any kind. These include the Village Café, local rugby club, peoples' private homes, the Whatawhata Tavern and classrooms at Whatawhata School. The netball club has reportedly met on occasion in someone's garage. These types of spaces were described as "someone else's venue" rather than a venue that is "ours". They also suggested that there are no playgrounds for younger children or skate parks or spaces for teenagers.

Facilities mentioned by participants included local sports grounds and local rugby club, the local school (i.e. for dance lessons and sports events) and a very small room at the tennis club which was viewed as being unsuitable for meetings. The local marae is used for activities such as sport and recreation activities (e.g. basketball, netball and rugby league) and church services. A perceived limitation of the marae is that when a tangi is being held, all previously scheduled community-related events must either be postponed or cancelled.

It was noted that the nearby Te Kowhai community have their own hall with a CRV (rating valuation) of over \$1 million. The local school reportedly uses the neighbouring Te Kowhai Hall on occasions for activities such as prize-

giving ceremonies due to their own school not having an equivalent venue. The group also signalled there is no public toilet in the central business area of Whatawhata which has caused some issues for businesses and visitors to the town.

The group stated that any future community facility would not need to be a large one. Accordingly they are “realistic” about what any possible venue might be comprised of and indicated that a space of approximately 120m² with a kitchenette and ability to accommodate a bit of outdoor overflow would be more than adequate. Participants felt that functions or activities that required use of any outdoor space would also benefit from retractable shade sails that could be installed above doors on the side of any building. Three potential sites were discussed as possible options during the workshop.*

*In the writer’s opinion and that of the WRRRA 120m² is not an adequate space for the proposed facility. 200 – 300m² would be more appropriate.

Further Consultation

There has been no formal consultation by WDC with the community to date. In particular the need and extent for a targeted rate to be applied to all ratepayers within the proposed catchment needs to be presented to the community. This is planned as part of the project schedule.

Needs Analysis

During community consultation the following groups were identified as likely or potential users of a new facility:

Organisation	Purpose
Whatawhata Residents and Ratepayers Association	Meetings, social events
Whatawhata Knaps and Knickers playgroup	Regular playgroup sessions
Whatawhata Tennis Club	Meetings, social events
Whatawhata Netball	Meetings, social events
Yoga group	Exercise sessions
Maori Women's Institute	Meetings
Marae groups	Meetings, recreation
Public Health Nurse	Consultations
Whatawhata Primary School	Meetings and indoor activities

Whatawhata Primary School

The school has a roll of 280 students, from 170 families, but is expecting over 300 students in the 2019 year, and continued growth for the foreseeable future. It is located on Kura St on the northern side of the township, about 5 minutes walk along SH39 from the proposed hall location. It currently has no on-site hall, and no space to develop one. It currently uses Te Kowhai Hall and the marae for socials, prizegiving and school assemblies.

Principal Matt Stockton is very supportive of the plans for a new community facility, and believes it will have major benefits for the school.

While the planned facility won't be large enough to accommodate the whole school for assemblies and prize givings it will enable a wide range of activities that are currently uncatered for. He foresees the school using the facility on a number of days per week, particularly during the winter, for kapa haka, gymnastics, physical education and general exercise.

The location, less than 10 minutes walk from the school, will be convenient. Mr Stockton did note that road crossings and footpaths in their current state are not appropriate but that there are plans for those to be upgraded.

Potential New Users

It is likely that once a facility is available a number of other existing groups would be likely to show interest.

Furthermore a new facility may stimulate the establishment of new community groups, possibly including:

- Music
- Cubs, Scouts, Girl Guides
- Indoor bowls
- Dance classes

- Yoga/pilates classes
- Martial arts
- Youth groups
- Aged citizen groups

Events and private functions are also likely users of the new facility. These will not only facilitate increased community interaction and socialisation, but will provide a revenue stream for the facility. These are likely to include:

- Family gatherings
- Wakes/tangi
- Birthday and engagement parties
- Fundraising events, such as quiz nights

The Visitor Insight study (pg 19) included the following observations:

- *Events and private functions, community groups and sport and recreation-based providers are the three primary types of hall user groups or activities in the WDC halls network.*
- *Family functions are the most common form of private event.*
- *A wide range of community groups use the WDC halls network, including schools, playgroups and churches.*
- *Indoor bowls is the most popular sport and recreation-related activity.*

Local Businesses

There are a number of commercial enterprises located in the Whatawhata village. The businesses adjacent to the proposed site are supportive of the proposal. There have also been a range of offers of support from other local businesses to help build the facility.

Site Options

The WRRRA, alongside WDC, considered 5 options for location of a new facility:

1. Road reserve off the end of school road towards SH39. It was felt this site is too small and also too close to neighboring houses. There are potential issues with access around an adjoining house.
2. Road reserve on the river side of SH 39 in the village. Also felt this site too small and has issues with access around state highway.
3. Old hall site (the current proposal). This site was initially ruled out due to cultural sensitivities due to its proximity to urupaa. A resolution to dispose of the site was initially passed then rescinded upon investigation and discussions with Kaumatua and Marae chairs.
4. Whatawhata domain (the rugby club grounds). This was ruled out due to potential re route of SH39 and lack of space.
5. A house for sale adjacent to the school. However ruled out due to cost (\$700k for property, plus renovation costs).

The current (old hall) site was chosen as the preferred option for a number of reasons:

- Central location close to existing commercial businesses, and the natural hub of the community.
- Creating a new access off Rothwell Lane would give better, safer access to the urupaa and provide overflow parking on the old road reserve
- General agreement that the commercial land adjacent would have no objection regarding noise and traffic.
- Land owned by WDC.
- Local iwi would not like to see this land sold
- Cultural sensitivities were earlier raised as issues but proved to be unfounded. Upon consultation iwi supported this option.

Prior to the WRRRA consultation in 2016/7 The Visitor Solutions study also considered a number of potential sites, as summarised in the following table from page 40.

Potential Whatawhata Sites	Pros	Cons
Whatawhata Recreation Reserve/Domain	<p>Good road accessibility(i.e.StateHighway39).</p> <p>Has good usage from current sports teams (e.g. Whatawhata Rugby Sports Club & Whatawhata Tennis Club).</p> <p>Parking available.</p> <p>Potential for active partnerships (e.g.school).</p> <p>Reserve management policy for Whatawhata Recreation Reserve in <i>Waikato District Sports Park Reserve Management Plan</i> (adopted June 2015) permits “the use of the reserve for a community facility that facilitates the community & recreation use of the reserve”. Potential to repurpose an existing asset on-site (e.g. building).</p>	<p>Governance & management concerns relating to Rugby Club “taking over” & having too much control of potential new facility.</p> <p>Ownership perceptions (related to previous point).</p> <p>No alcohol license available.</p> <p>Work required on state highway to make access safe.</p>

Old Hall Site	<p>Land thought to be available & owned by WDC (i.e. repurpose an existing asset).</p> <p>Central location (in “heart” of community).</p> <p>Could help form a central community hub with other complimentary venues (e.g. Village Café or Tavern).</p> <p>Good road accessibility (i.e. corner of State Highway 23 & 39).</p>	<p>Zoned under the Proposed District Plan as residential land (could produce issues relating to noise in evenings).</p> <p>Perceived as too far away from key potential user groups (e.g. school or sports groups).</p> <p>Poor visibility suggested.</p> <p>Security/safety concerns.</p>
Land on Corner of State Highway 23/39	<p>Central location.</p> <p>Good road accessibility (i.e. corner of State Highway 23 & 39).</p> <p>Good size land block.</p> <p>Zoned as rural.</p>	<p>Perceived as too far away from key potential user groups (e.g. school or sports groups).</p> <p>Is a urupaa (burialground).</p> <p>Various & significant Maori cultural issues mean site is not appropriate from Maori perspective (e.g. preparation of & food consumption, presence of ancestors, etc.).</p> <p>Marae Committee wishes land to stay as is.</p> <p>New build required.</p>
Land opposite 1293-1297 Horotiu Road	<p>Central location.</p> <p>Good road accessibility (i.e. State Highway 39).</p> <p>Potential to include a public walkway to connect different features of Whatawhata.</p> <p>Over looking river.</p> <p>Site could include a public toilet (currently absent from central Whatawhata).</p>	

At that time the fourth option, land opposite 1293-1297 Horotiu Road, was identified as the favoured option. This was subsequently dropped upon further investigation and consultation as described above due to the site being very narrow with steep drop off to the Waipa River.

School/Community Partnership

A school community facility partnership also remains a possibility but has not been explored in depth. The Tourism Insights study noted that 14 halls in the WDC network have active partnerships with their

respective local schools, and recommended a school community partnership should be considered as an option for Whatawhata.

In this case a formal school community partnership is not a strong option. Normally such an arrangement would involve a facility being built on or adjacent to school (Ministry of Education) land, and the facility being managed to ensure efficient use and mutual benefit for the school and community. In this case the school does not have available land, and the location is some distance from the school, so there are not the economic or direct benefits for each party that a partnership could provide.

Additionally the MOE has previously indicated that it will prioritise investment in building classrooms not hall facilities.

That still leaves open the possibility of a less formal arrangement between the school and the facility managers giving the school specific access and other benefits.

Although a formal community school facility partnership also remains an opportunity but was not raised at the community workshop. The school does not have space within its current boundaries to build on MOE land

Political and Organisational Support

Based on consultation and the background work done by WRRRA, and confirmed by the Tourism Insights study, WDC has agreed that there is sufficient demonstrated need within the Whatawhata community for a 'Community of Interest' approach to be taken to developing a new facility.

This means that although the Whatawhata community has access to other facilities in nearby communities (Te Kowhai and Koromatua) it has a sufficiently strong and defined identity, and local need, that it would benefit from having its own facility.

WDC has demonstrated support for the project (formally via resolution and through inclusion in the 2015-2025 Long Term Plan (LTP)) and has formally resolved to support the proposed catchment.

WRRRA has shown itself to be a very effective community organisation that can work closely with WDC. There is sufficient goodwill and meeting of minds to ensure a satisfactory outcome, and a facility that provides for the needs of the Whatawhata community

There was budget in the 2015-2025 LTP for a build (though the funding of this was questioned) and the local Councillor (Cr. Noel Smith) has received verbal support from the Mayor to provide \$250,000 of WDC funding for the project going forward. The balance would need to be funded by the community via a targeted rate and/or via external grant funding. The project team are currently developing a funding plan so that the extent of a targeted rate (if any) can be communicated to the community.

WDC commissioned the *Proposed Whatawhata Community Facility Preliminary Overview of Resource Consent Requirements* report in order to understand the Resource Consent implications of developing the proposed facility.

WDC has also commissioned this Feasibility Report in order to facilitate further community consultation, and support grant funding applications.

A WDC working group, consisting of Donna Rawlings (WDC Project Manager), members of the Whatawhata Residents & Ratepayers Assoc. (WRRRA), the local Councillor (Cr. Noel Smith) and Bev Gatenby (independent consultant) has been formed to move the project forward.

There has been no formal consultation by WDC with the community (in particular, those that fall within the proposed catchment) to date. This is planned as part of the project and will be required where any targeted rate is needed.

Resources and Capability

There appear to be no significant resourcing or capability issues with this project.

The support and commitment of the WDC is a major positive factor. WDC has already demonstrated this in its close involvement with the Whatawhata community, its preparatory work, and commitment in the recent 2015-2025 Long Term Plan.

Furthermore the system of supporting the existing network of halls in the district is a successful one, and provides clear guidance for the establishment and ongoing operation of the Whatawhata facility.

The WDC will provide a significant proportion of funding, as well as feasibility and planning, consenting, engineering and project management services to the development of the facility.

Further capital funding, likely to be around \$500,000 (see High Level Cost Forecasts below), should be accessible through community funding sources.

Capital Requirements

The capital and operational costs associated with any refurbishment or new builds or refurbishments are difficult to estimate until more detail of the facility has been decided.

As a general guide a build cost of \$3,000 per m² is considered a reasonable estimate. A basic 200m² space would therefore have a rough cost of \$600,000 (excl. GST, professional fees, ground /site costs, landscaping and consents).

A preliminary estimate of \$150,000 is allowed for these extra costs.

Therefore an estimated total cost of \$750,000, excluding GST should be planned for, subject to final design.

It may be prudent to build in a further 10-15% cost overrun allowance. This has not been included in capital cost forecasts at this early stage.

Funding

Community Funders including Lotteries, Trust Waikato, WEL Energy Trust and gaming trusts including Grassroots, Trillion, Well Being Trust are all likely sources of funding for the capital cost of the facility, the fitout, and ongoing operating expenses.

The community will be expected to demonstrate its commitment to the project, with some contribution. WRRRA is already planning a fundraising program.

A preliminary funding plan has been discussed, based on an initial cost estimate of \$750,000, excluding GST.

Preliminary Funding Plan

	1,000s	%
Work to be completed by NZTA/Roading	\$15	2.00
Fundraised by the WRRRA	\$20	2.66
Wellbeing Trust	\$20	2.66
WEL	\$50	6.66
Trillion (fixtures/furniture)	\$20	2.66
Trust Waikato	\$20	2.66
Waikato District Council	\$250	33.00
Lotteries	\$355	47.33
Total	\$750	100.00

\$500,000 is not an unreasonable amount to be raised from these sources for a project such as this. It is quite possible that no further sources of funds will be required.

If extra funds are required, due to funds raised from these sources not being sufficient, or cost overruns, further money could be raised through a loan from WDC, with interest and principle repaid by the community via an annual targeted rate (in addition to the targeted rate charged for annual operating costs. See Targeted Rating below for further discussion).

As an example if a further \$250,000 was required the 670 ratepayers within the proposed catchment would be charged \$43 (including GST) per household per year, for 15 years. A \$100,000 loan would cost each household \$17 per year.

Financial Management

Targeted Rating

WDC will also provide a satisfactory means of ongoing funding for the operation of the facility through its targeted rating system that it already applies to other community facilities.

The targeted rate income is collected by WDC from ratepayers for specific projects. All the halls within the WDC network are funded in this way. The rates are payable (in general) per *“separately used or inhabited part of a rating unit”*. Effectively, this means the rate is charged on a per dwelling basis.

The range of targeted rates in the Waikato District range from approximately \$24.00 to \$50.00 (including GST) per dwelling (with a couple of special exceptions). For the purposes of estimating income from targeted rates for Whatawhata the rate is assumed to be \$35 per rateable dwelling. There are 670 rateable dwellings in the proposed Whatawhata catchment (including those that are proposed to be transferred from the Koromatua catchment). This indicates the approximate income from a targeted rate will be \$23,500.

From this targeted rate income WDC deducts building insurance, rates, building WOF costs etc. and pays the balance out to the Hall Committee (referred to as *“Payments to Hall Committee”*). For the purposes of this analysis the net sum paid to the Hall Committee is estimated to be \$5,685.

Hall Committees set the amounts charged to hire their hall (including bonds etc.), collect this income direct and pay operating expenditure from this. They are expected to plan and budget for capital expenditure from this income, the net targeted rate income from council and any fundraising income.

Depreciation is not funded for Community Halls, therefore WDC does not have reserve funding available for renewal (capital) expenditure.

The Hall Committee proposes the amount of targeted rate to be charged to ratepayers within their catchment. This is based on their forecast expenditure and income and work programmes over the next three years (generally this occurs during LTP planning). WDC then consults directly with ratepayers within the catchment and sets the rates based on feedback.

The community based management committee has the capability to provide effective ongoing management and administration of the facility to ensure it is used effectively, well maintained and maximises benefits for the Whatawhata community.

This committee will be responsible for ongoing management of the facility. This will require prudent financial management, effective scheduling of users, and ensuring hireage income is sufficient, along with the targeted rates contribution, to cover operating costs.

Financial Forecasts

The performance of other comparable community halls in the Waikato District provide some guidance to the likely financial performance of the Whatawhata facility.

For the purposes of high level analysis the following income and expenditure forecast has been derived from hall data provided by WDC.

Income and Expenditure Accounts of Comparable Community Halls in the Waikato District

	Ohinewai	Whangarata	Port Waikato	Taupiri	Average
Income					
Hall Hire	9,349	50	7,341	3386	5,031
Targeted Rate	2,468	2,463	8,724	9086	5,685
Other				411	
Total Income	11,817	2,513	16,065	12,883	10,819
Expenses					
Interest received	585				
Advertising	92				
Donations	2,931		100		
Postage & stationery	145		31		
Building compliance					
Cleaning	2,817			742	
Electricity	2,469	800	929	2542	
Insurance	2,178			1068	
Repairs & Maintenance	584	8	7,551	4703	
Sundries		60			
Administration			302		
Audit fee			230		
Fund raising expenses			1,414		
Gas			199		
Security				385	
Secretary Honorarium				300	
Total Expenses	11,801	868	10,758	8672	8042
Net Profit/Loss	16	1,645	5,307	4,211	2794

Most of these halls are over 50 years old, and significantly larger (over 500sqm) than the proposed Whatawhata facility so costs can be expected to be higher for these halls than the Whatawhata facility. However for the purposes of this analysis those costs are used as a guide.

The following forecast has been derived based on these figures. The forecast hire revenue has been estimated based on the assumptions in the Bookings and Scheduling section below. The targeted rate income has been set at the average above.

Forecast Annual Income and Expenditure

Income	
Payments to hall committee (hireage)	7,280
Targeted rate Income	5,685
Total Income	12,965
Expenditure	
Repairs & Maintenance	1,000
Insurance	1,500
Security	500
Electricity & Gas	2,000
Cleaning	2,000
Administration	300
Advertising & communications	500
Total Expenses	7,800
Net Surplus	5,165

NB Building and other capital items have also not been included.

The forecast annual net surplus is approximately \$5,000 and indicates that the facility should be able to operate on a financially sustainable basis.

Depreciation has not been allowed for and is not funded by WDC. The hall management committee should allocate a portion of operating surpluses to a depreciation account to provide for future renovations and capital replacement. It should also build up a contingency account from any surpluses in its early years.

Bookings and Scheduling

It is assumed bookings will be handled by the hall management committee, probably with a person or persons acting as Booking Officer. There are various models that could be used for this. Some sort of web based system for displaying the booking calendar, and availability, with direct contact details for enquiries and making bookings would be useful.

The following assumptions and forecasts provide an indication of likely use, and hireage income.

Hours available per day (7am – 9pm)	14
Hours available per week	98
Likely hours use per day	4
Likely hours use per week	28
Occupancy	29%
Average hire rate per hour	\$5
Income per week	\$140
Annual income	\$7,280
Average use time per booking	1.5 hours
Number of user sessions/week	18
Number of people/group	10
Number of people/week	180
Number of people/year	9,300

The above provides a general indication of likely average use and of likely charges for the sustainable financial operation of the facility.

The management committee may decide to have a more structured system of charges for the hall with different rates for different groups.

Operational Description

It is expected that the facility will be used on a daily basis by a variety of groups, as described above.

Based on other comparable facilities, from data provided in the Visitor Solutions, Waikato District Halls Feasibility and Associated Facilities Study Report, and by WDC, it is expected that the facility will be used by approximately 18 groups, for up to 30 hours per week. It is expected that there will be approximately 775 monthly users (9,300 users per year).

The facility will need to be versatile, designed and constructed to handle a variety of uses including some rugged activity by school groups etc. It will need to be equipped with the variety of users in mind.

Care should be taken to foresee the way various users will use the facility, including the way they approach, enter, set up, what services and equipment they will require, how they pack up, tidy up, and leave. This means details such as lighting, security, storage, furniture, wall coverings, power points all need to be carefully planned.

Cleaning and Maintenance

To ensure the facility is maintained in good condition the management committee should appoint a cleaner to carry out a regular cleaning routine. Hall members should monitor general condition and stay on top of repairs and maintenance.

Security

Security will be an ongoing consideration. The location way from the main road and not being easily visible could make it vulnerable. Alarms, lighting and other precautions should be taken into account.

Design and Operational Considerations

Discussions led by WRRRA to date have agreed that the facility should be a simple building:

- Approximately 200-300sqm
- Large hall space
- Small meeting room for smaller groups, breakouts and private meetings and consultations.
- Basic kitchenette
- Toilet facilities – possibly designed to provide access as public toilets.
- Storage for community groups

Other considerations that may be useful in design of the facility include:

- Provision of wheelchair access
- Heating - easy to operate, low maintenance, efficient
- While emphasising efficiency of kitchen facility ensure it is sufficient for likely users
- Provision of storage for cleaning and equipment for major users, including school and clubs, plus storage of furniture when hall needs to be cleared
- Security alarm and lighting considerations.

WRRRA has emphasised need for the building's appearance to be in keeping with the look and style of the village. The comment was that it "shouldn't look like a prefab". They suggested its stud height should be raised above normal residential height to ensure it doesn't look like a house.

Building Size

Careful consideration should be given to the floor area of the proposed building, including the needs of groups that are likely to be users of the facility when built, and future needs. While cost and affordability, and available space are primary factors in deciding the design detail of the building it may be worth putting extra effort into fund raising in order to have a larger building that suits the future needs of a growing community.

Timeline

The current timeline includes the following milestones:

To November 2018	Completion of feasibility study Completion of detailed concept design and cost estimation
To February 2019	Formal consultation process complete
To April 2019	Council ratification of consultation result
To December 2019	Funding complete
To February 2020	Formal consultation and confirmation of cost to ratepayers, including targeted rate (if required)
To April 2020	Council ratification of consultation result
To June 2020	Final consents granted Tender and contracts confirmed
To December 2020	Construction complete

Facility Ownership and Land Tenure

WDC will own the building. Being WDC land the proposed site has no potential tenure issues.

However as detailed in the GMD Consultants Preliminary Overview of Resource Consent report the siting of waste water disposal on road reserve and clarification of access to the site need to be formalised.

Governance and Management

A community committee will be formed to operate the hall. Under WDC's Terms of Reference for the management of community halls it is suggested that an incorporated society or a trust be established as the governance vehicle. This entity should be registered as not-for-profit and apply for tax exemption status.

Alternative Analysis

The alternatives to this proposal include:

Do nothing

There has been thorough previous debate and analysis around the alternatives to building the facility in Whatawhata.

The Visitor Solutions study clarified the alternatives, finding that on the basis of proximity and drive time, there are alternatives to a new facility, mainly the Te Kowhai Hall.

However it also found that the Te Kowhai Hall is already heavily used, with little available capacity. More importantly it found that there is a significant “community of interest” in Whatawhata which could justify a new facility.

WDC supports this approach, and agrees that the ‘community of interest’ in Whatawhata is sufficient.

Use or adapt existing facilities

There are no existing facilities in Whatawhata that are viable options.

Build on alternative locations

There has been sufficient consultation and analysis to rule out other alternatives to the proposed site, particularly due to costs associated with the purchase of land to develop the facility.

Project Benefits

Community facilities provide a number of benefits, including

- Bringing people together, providing opportunities for social interaction for all the community, from the very young to the aged
- Providing stability in a community that is growing and undergoing significant change
- Enabling alternatives for children and adolescents that takes them away from the TV or computer screen
- Contributing to social capital
- Providing a vehicle for inclusion, drawing together people of different ethnicities, religions and cultures
- Creating opportunities for volunteering and engagement in the community
- Community facilities are the hub of community life, especially in the regions
- Binding families and communities through shared experiences
- Promoting healthy, active lifestyles
- Providing a venue for activities that help develop life and leadership skills.

The proposed facility will provide specific benefits for current user groups in Whatawhata, enabling them to function more effectively and expand their activities.

It will also likely enable new groups, clubs and organisations to become established in Whatawhata.

Key Issues

The critical issues that will affect the success of this project are:

Community Consultation

There has been no formal consultation with the community to date. This is planned as part of the next stage of the project.

Formal consultation by WDC is required where any targeted rate is proposed.

Planning and Consents

The GMD Consultants report (pg12) clearly summarises planning and consent issues:

A community facility in this location would require resource consent under the Waikato District Plan as a Discretionary Activity. If certain building standards are breached, the activity may be considered as a Non-Complying Activity.

While resource consent would be required, the objectives and policies of the Waikato District Plan clearly anticipate this type of activity occurring in the Living Zone. Focus therefore needs to be placed on ensuring that any adverse effects of the activity on the surrounding area can be appropriately avoided, remedied or mitigated.

Matters such as vehicle access, traffic movements, and disposal of wastewater appear to be the most significant potential adverse effects that will need to be addressed in any resource consent application.

Funding

Sourcing and securing adequate capital funds to pay for the project. The involvement and support of WDC in this project is significant. Community funders should be confident in the value of this project and support it accordingly.

Effective Project Management

WDC will provide the necessary oversight and project management resources to ensure it proceeds and meets its compliance requirements.

Community Leadership and Commitment

The positive commitment of the Whatawhata community is vital to this project. WRRRA has proven itself to be an effective facilitator for the community.

Appropriate Governance and Management

The success of the facility will depend on an effective governance and management structure. The structure upon which all the Waikato District community halls are based will provide ample guidance in establishing the necessary governance and management processes.

Sustainability

The proposed facility needs to be financially and operationally sustainable if this project is to succeed in the long term. The high level financial forecasts and operational considerations indicate that the facility will produce consistent financial surpluses, and will be sustainable.

Life Cycle of the New Facility

Generally the expected period of useful function for public facilities is 50 years. Other than routine maintenance and expansion or changes due to evolving needs, the facility should have an economic and functional life for that period.

Key Findings

1. Whatawhata is a strong community with a desire to create an effective community hub facility.
2. The wider community which would benefit from this facility includes approximately 670 households, with a total population of approximately 2500.
3. There is a diverse and significant range of social needs in the Whatawhata community which would be effectively catered by the proposal.
4. WDC has found that there is a *Community of Interest* in Whatawhata which justifies the proposed facility, despite the proximity of other community halls at Te Kowhai and Koromatua.
5. The nature and extent of the proposed developments are practical, achievable and appropriate to the Whatawhata community and its wider catchment's needs.
6. Operational forecasts, demonstrable need and the likelihood of effective and committed management, are strong indications that this facility will be sustainable.
7. There are currently no alternative facilities that provide for the needs of the wider community, nor which could be developed effectively.
8. The proposed location is the best option for a new community facility for the Whatawhata community. It should be noted that there is restricted space on the site, and potential for future expansion of the facility will be limited.
9. While a comprehensive business case has not been completed, taking into account current activities and likely increased opportunities for income generation, the proposed facility and its operations are very likely to be financially viable, and sustainable.
10. It is apparent that there is broad support from the community, which can see the benefits to its own members and the community.
11. Formal community consultation will be required to confirm the location and design of the new facility, and to confirm support for any proposed targeting rates.
12. A capable Steering Group has been established to lead and oversee the project. This group includes individuals with key skills and experience that will greatly assist the project and maximise outcomes.
13. WRRRA initiated this project and is providing effective leadership of it on behalf of the community.
14. The proposal sits within the policy framework of the WDC, and has clear commitment from WDC.
15. The commitment of WDC in providing design, planning and funding support, and the collaborative approach shown between WDC and the WRRRA, are key factors that increase the likelihood of success.
16. The project is likely to have a minimum of 30% of required funds committed before initiating fundraising.
17. There appear to be no barriers to the facility proceeding in terms of land tenure. There is some work to be done in confirming access and waste water details and iwi support.
18. The facility should be able to operate in a financially sustainable manner, and be substantially self-funding, along with contribution from targeted rates.
19. There are established structures for the governance and management of WDC halls which will be appropriate for this facility, and facilitate its sustainability.

20. The project will be a worthy recipient for community funding.
21. The useful life of the new facilities should be at least 50 years, so long as an appropriate maintenance and updating program is maintained.
22. The benefits that will flow from this project are diverse and profound for the future of the Whatawhata community.

Recommendation

This is a prudent, well considered development that should proceed to final planning, consultation and funding stages.

This project should continue to be supported by the WDC, and by community funders.

Some intermediate milestones should be completed prior to final decision to proceed, and as conditions to funding decisions.

These include:

- A complete planning and project costing process
- More detailed analysis of ongoing operating costs
- Clarification of operational management and relationships with WRRRA
- Completion of a larger proportion of capital fund raising requirements.

Appendices

1. Proposed Whatawhata Community Facility Preliminary Overview of Resource Consent Requirements, GMD Consultants Ltd, 2017
2. Waikato District Halls Feasibility and Associated Facilities Study Report Richard Griffiths, Craig Jones and Gordon Cessford, 16th May 2017
3. Waikato District Plan - <https://www.waikatodistrict.govt.nz/your-council/plans-policies-and-bylaws/plans/district-plan>
4. <https://www.waikatodistrict.govt.nz/your-district/district-overview>